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Chairman: Ms. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad and Tobago)
later: Mr. Alaei (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Islamic Republic of Iran)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 107: Advancement of women (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.11/Rev.1

1. **Mr. van Walsum** (Netherlands), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour" (A/C.3/55/L.11/Rev.1), said that the following countries had joined the list of sponsors: Botswana, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Monaco, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Ukraine. The draft resolution was based on the consensus reached at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the sponsors believed it was a fitting moment for the General Assembly to strive to contribute to the elimination of those horrific and wholly unjustified crimes. That required fundamental changes in societal attitudes, and the use of legislative, educational and social measures such as awareness-raising campaigns. States should do their utmost to prevent and investigate crimes committed in the name of honour and to punish the perpetrators.

2. Although the issue was relatively new for the United Nations, many efforts were already being undertaken at the national and international level to eliminate such crimes. The draft resolution had been formulated in a transparent, cooperative manner, resulting in revisions to the text, in particular the title, the broadened scope of operative paragraph 1, and the deletion of a number of paragraphs that caused concern for some delegations. The numerous changes demonstrated the flexibility of the sponsors. The outcome document of the twenty-third special session had already demonstrated that no Government approved of honour crimes, and that there was consensus on that issue. The document was an important step towards ensuring full respect for the human rights of women throughout the world.

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.13/Rev.1

3. **Ms. Mesdoa** (Algeria), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Elimination of all forms of violence including crimes against women" (A/C.3/55/L.13/Rev.1), said that the following countries had joined the list of sponsors: Cape Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan and Yemen.

4. Violence was one of the most serious obstacles to the advancement and empowerment of women in society. The draft resolution, which was based on the consensus reflected in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session, addressed all aspects of violence, including crimes against women, in a comprehensive, integrated manner, and the sponsors hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1

5. **Ms. Ukaeje** (Nigeria) introduced the draft resolution entitled "The critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women" (A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Mexico, which expressed concern at the lack of resources to ensure the operation of the Institute in 2001. A credibility crisis had discouraged some donors from contributing to the Trust Fund from which the activities of the Institute were financed. And yet, under its new director, Ms. Eleni Stamiris, the Institute had developed the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) in less than a year, fulfilling the General Assembly mandate, and had done so despite a dearth of voluntary contributions. The completion on schedule of the first phase of the GAINS system was an example of what the Institute could do and a good reason to provide it with better support. Closing down a body whose mandate was to carry out research and training for the advancement of women in the same year in which the outcome document of the twenty-third special session had reaffirmed the importance of the Institute and the GAINS system would call into question the commitment of Member States to the needs of women and to gender equality. The year 2001 would be decisive for the survival of the Institute, and the sponsors hoped that the Committee would support the draft resolution in order to ensure that it would be able to continue its important work.

Agenda item 110: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.18/Rev.1

6. **Ms. Sereno** (Uruguay), introducing the draft resolution entitled "The rights of the child" (A/C.3/55/L.18/Rev.1), sponsored by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the European Union and also by the delegations listed in the

document, said that Ethiopia, Israel, Mozambique, Poland, Turkey and Viet Nam had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

7. Very important developments had taken place in 2000, such as the adoption of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the commencement of preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children in September 2001. The special session was the appropriate framework within which to closely address the diverse topics relating to children in general. In order not to jeopardize the outcome of that process or the commitments to be adopted by the respective Governments, the draft resolution largely reflected agreed language on the various issues. However, in the 2000 draft resolution, a reference had been added to the problem of illegal adoptions, and also a special paragraph on the need to prevent the abuse of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and inhalants among children, as well as preventing other addictions, in particular addiction to alcohol and tobacco. In view of the dramatic spread of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic, the section on health included specific references to that grave problem, and in the section on education a paragraph had been added on the need to ensure that all children had access to education, in accordance with the commitment made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Special reference had also been made in the 2000 draft resolution to violence against children, from a broad conceptual perspective. In the section dealing with the protection of children affected by armed conflict specific references had been made to the particular vulnerability of the girl child in situations of armed conflict.

8. She highlighted the efforts made by all the delegations which had participated in the negotiation of the draft resolution to achieve a text which reflected the concerns about situations affecting children, with a view to placing the highest and most urgent priority on the basic needs of children. She hoped that in matters concerning children, the Committee would set aside other concerns which were not exclusively related to the needs of children and the commitment and responsibility of Member States in that respect.

Agenda item 114: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.31/Rev.1

9. **Ms. Chatsis** (Canada), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights" (A/C.3/55/L.31/Rev.1), said that the following countries wished to join the list of sponsors: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ecuador, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Poland, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

10. Changes had been made to the text to refer to some of the developments that had occurred over the past two years and to incorporate some language from the companion resolution on the subject adopted by the Commission on Human rights in April 2000. The articulation of human rights norms and their codification into treaties had been one of the major accomplishments of the United Nations since its inception. The human rights treaties, and their committees, were a central part of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. That was a collective effort and treaty bodies required the support and assistance of the Secretariat and States parties in order to ensure their effective functioning. The draft resolution attempted to address some of the major challenges facing the treaty bodies, the Secretariat and the States parties in the fulfilment of their responsibilities.

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/55/177, A/55/213 and Add.1, A/55/214 and Add.1, A/55/275 and Add.1, A/55/279, A/55/280, and Add.1 and 2, A/55/283, A/55/288, A/55/289, A/55/291, A/55/292, A/55/296 and Add.1, A/55/302, A/55/306, A/55/328, A/55/342, A/55/360, A/55/395-S/2000/880, A/55/404-S/2000/889, A/55/408 and A/C.3/55/2)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/55/269, A/55/282 and Corr.1, A/55/294, A/55/318, A/55/335, A/55/346, A/55/358, A/55/359, A/55/363, A/55/374, A/55/400, A/55/403, A/55/509 and A/55/426-S/2000/913)

(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (*continued*) (A/55/36 and A/55/438-S/2000/93)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*continued*) (A/55/36)

11. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that universal respect for human rights was increasingly necessary at the dawn of a new century in which globalization and new information technologies had transformed the world into a "global village". Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, considerable progress had been made in the sphere of fundamental rights, but much more remained to be done. Human rights were universal, indivisible and interdependent, and every human being should enjoy those rights irrespective of race, sex, religion or political persuasion. Cameroon renewed its commitment to cooperate with the international community in ensuring that the new century became a century of dignity for all peoples and respect for all human rights. The work of the international community in that area should concentrate on the promotion of the rule of law and on the organization and functioning of the State in accordance with democratic principles and respect for human rights. It should also accord priority to the fight against poverty, as that was one of the most serious threats to human dignity and it nullified the other fundamental rights.

12. Cameroon had opted for the creation of a democratic State and, to that end, had ratified almost all human rights instruments and met its related commitments, including the submission of reports to the monitoring bodies established by those instruments. At the domestic level, standards had been set through the adoption of numerous laws dealing with fundamental rights and freedoms. The Constitution of 18 January 1986, for example, embodied a real commitment to the promotion of human rights by making the international human rights instruments ratified by Cameroon part of its constitutional framework. In addition, the new Constitution provided for the creation of institutions necessary for establishing the rule of law as well as for decentralization with a view to achieving a more participatory democracy in which minority rights were protected. Cameroon had ratified and integrated into its constitutional framework the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Constitution also confirmed the right to life and physical and moral integrity and the right not to be subjected to torture. In order to implement both the Convention and the Constitution, in January 1997 Law No. 97/009, which incorporated in the Criminal Code an article defining the crime of torture in the same terms as the Convention and prescribed the punishment for that crime and Law No. 97/010, which amended and finalized extradition procedures, had been promulgated.

13. Objective analysis of the situation in Cameroon demonstrated the tireless efforts of the public authorities to guarantee full respect for human rights at all levels. However, economic difficulties were a real obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights, despite the best efforts of governments. Although the international community certainly condemned human rights violations, it was important to provide encouragement and support for the efforts undertaken by countries like Cameroon. In that context, he welcomed the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to do so all over the world and in particular in Central Africa, where she had supported the establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. He looked forward to the imminent arrival in Yaoundé of a human rights adviser who would assist in activating the Centre and promote cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other relevant bodies of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Human rights education also contributed to the development of a culture of peace and international security. The proposal by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a seminar in 2000 for the purpose of defining criteria and indicators for expanding the right to education must therefore be supported, taking into account the concerns expressed by the Group of 77 during

negotiations on the related programme of the new United Nations medium-term plan.

14. **Mr. Tekin** (Turkey) appreciated and supported the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote human rights throughout the world. He noted that when the Millennium Summit was held, there were 273 signatures, accessions or ratifications of international human rights instruments. In addition, at the dawn of the new millennium, as a result of globalization, boundaries between nations on issues such as good governance and human rights were rapidly disappearing. The High Commissioner nevertheless expressed concern about the human rights situation in the world, and had warned that the human rights treaty instruments could not be truly effective without adequate resources. She had also noted that in spite of the progress made, there had been little movement in key areas such as the prevention of gross violations of human rights and the practical application of knowledge and awareness of human rights at the grass-roots level. He cautioned, however, that while no effort must be spared in the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of the rule of law, human rights issues must not be used to destabilize other countries with agendas which departed from the declared objective of protecting human rights. Constructive criticism was essential for promoting human rights in the world, because no country was perfect in that respect. There was room for improvement everywhere and each country had the duty and obligation to achieve the highest standards of human rights, a goal which was only possible in a pluralistic democracy.

15. Turkey, as a member of the family of democratic nations, had contributed to the development of international human rights instruments and was open to most of the international monitoring mechanisms, while its independent judiciary, free media and increasingly influential non-governmental organizations also played a prominent role in safeguarding human rights. The Government and Parliament constantly reviewed human rights legislation with a view to ensuring that its citizens enjoyed the highest standards of human rights. Legislative measures were complemented by measures for human rights education; human rights courses were taught at the primary and high school levels as well as in programmes intended to prepare future civil servants. In addition, a high-level interministerial human rights coordinating body constantly monitored human rights issues, took decisions and ensured follow-up. At the international level cooperation continued with the human rights treaty bodies. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments or punishments and on religious intolerance had visited Turkey in 1998 and 1999 and a visit from the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial summary or arbitrary executions was expected shortly. At the regional level, Turkey cooperated fully with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. Furthermore, in August 2000 Turkey had signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. During the Millennium Summit, Turkey had also signed the two optional protocols on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

16. Turkey cherished the diversity of its peoples and the rights of its citizens, whatever their ethnic origin, religion or language. Human rights issues, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and constitutional and legislative reform had been national priorities in spite of the country's long and painful experience with one of the world's worst terrorist campaigns. It had successfully fought terrorism while at the same time making remarkable progress in the field of human rights. Those who had provided assistance, shelter and financial resources to terrorist organizations had failed to undermine Turkey's commitment to democracy and human rights.

17. *Mr. Alaei (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

18. **Mr. Hynes** (Canada) said that the Millennium Summit had reinforced the vital role of the United Nations in serving the peoples of the world, by emphasizing the Organization's responsibility for building a culture of respect for human rights in all States and better enforcing humanitarian and human rights law. The Committee's human rights debate was useful in responding to that demand by confronting the failures of Governments and the international community and identifying what must be done.

19. Human rights were especially in jeopardy in situations of armed conflict, as had been demonstrated in a number of tragic situations. In the Sudan, Government forces indiscriminately bombed the population in the south, including schools and hospitals. The use of child soldiers, forced displacement, abductions, forced labour and the servile status of women and children were widespread. Although the liberation of 16 people who had been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army was encouraging, the Government must implement fully its recent commitments. In the Republic of Chechnya in the Russian Federation, the conflict showed no signs of resolution and civilians remained at risk from combat between Russians and Chechens as well as terrorism and land mines. The conflict could only be ended through comprehensive negotiated political solution. The Russian Federation should cooperate more closely with international experts, including those of the United Nations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo a worsening human rights situation had been exacerbated by the continuing presence of foreign troops in the country. All parties to the conflict must protect humanitarian personnel in the zones under their control. He strongly encouraged all signatories to the Lusaka Agreement to fulfil their undertakings to respect human rights and humanitarian law. In Burundi, the signature of the Arusha Peace Agreement was to be welcomed, but the fighting continued, and he called on the rebels to cease their attacks and conclude a ceasefire agreement. The human rights situation in Afghanistan continued to be appalling, particularly the treatment of women sanctioned by the Taliban and the use of air power against civilians. The Taliban must recognize that they would obtain nothing from the outside world until such practices stopped. In Colombia, the single most serious human rights issue remained the deliberate targeting of civilians by illegal armed groups. The Government should ensure access to de facto prisoners of war, protect human rights defenders, the indigenous population, and the Peace Communities, and must bring to justice those responsible for threats, murders and kidnappings. The long-standing conflict in Sri Lanka and the serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law by both the Government and the forces of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were yet another example of the impact of war on civilian populations, particularly children.

20. In other instances, the aftermath of conflict had left countries in a fragile transition period. The ways in which countries tackled issues of impunity, conducted elections, built functioning human rights institutions and cooperated with the international community would determine whether they moved forward to lasting peace or reverted to situations of conflict. Eritrea and Ethiopia were largely abiding by the agreement on cessation of hostilities, but the human rights and humanitarian situations in both countries remained a matter of concern. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia should remain fully engaged in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) peace process. Respect for human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina had improved over the past year, thanks to considerable international pressure. The establishment of a transparent and impartial judicial system and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia were crucial to the long-term prospects. The recent stepping down from power of indicted war criminal Slobodan Milosevic in the federal Government of Yugoslavia was a welcome development; his delegation hoped that it would lead to a much improved human rights situation in the country. In Sierra Leone, the peace process remained stalled and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme had virtually stopped. Canada supported moves to create a special tribunal to judge the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. He welcomed the recent agreement between the Cambodian Government and the United Nations on a war crimes tribunal for the Khmer Rouge period and encouraged it to adopt the necessary legislation. He also urged the Government to ensure that the forthcoming municipal elections would take place without violence. The efforts of Haiti to fight impunity were encouraging, but his delegation remained concerned by the overall human rights situation. Canada hoped that the Organization of American States (OAS) would facilitate a dialogue which would correct the main deficiencies in Haiti's legislative elections. In Indonesia, the resurgence of violence in Aceh, the Moluccas and West Timor continued to be of concern, as did the plight of a million people who had been displaced within their own country. He welcomed the Government's extension of the humanitarian ceasefire in Aceh, and encouraged it to continue to prosecute human rights violations in all regions.

21. Although the primary obligation to protect human rights lay with the State, it could not be discharged

through authoritarian dictates without regard for the wishes of citizens. Government by decree was not the same as the rule of law. In that context the Government of Iraq continued to rule by terror and refused serious engagement with the new Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights. The situation of human rights in Myanmar continued to deteriorate and the authorities were resorting to increasingly repressive treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy. His delegation urged immediate steps to comply with the International Labour Organization recommendations regarding forced labour, and reiterated its call for genuine commitment to national reconciliation. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where the absence of respect for human rights was a long-standing concern, Canada welcomed the Government's shift towards greater international engagement. To encourage such progress, Canada had recognized the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a State and would urge it to act in accordance with the rule of law and international human rights standards.

22. A State's willingness to accept international scrutiny by treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms helped build respect for the rule of law. Canada commended China's efforts to modernize its legal system and carry out important, difficult economic reforms, but remained concerned about continued restrictions on civil and political rights, which were crucial to progress on all fronts. Canada urged China to assign high priority to ratifying and implementing the agreements it had signed. The same applied to Malaysia, which had seen a broad decline in the human rights situation and especially the right to peaceful dissent and to freedom of expression over the past year.

23. Treaties, constitutional provisions and political commitments to respect human rights were meaningless unless they were implemented. Canada strongly urged the Government of Viet Nam to respect the political and religious freedoms protected by its Constitution and to have less recourse to the death penalty. Canada was also concerned about the increasingly frequent recourse to the death penalty and other forms of cruel punishment in Saudi Arabia, often without respect for due process. It hoped that the Saudi Arabian Government's stated readiness to pay greater attention to United Nations human rights mechanisms would be reflected in greater conformity with international human rights standards. Despite the institutional initiatives that the Government of Pakistan had begun to take, full implementation of its commitments to democratic transition and reform was essential to put an end to widespread human rights violations in that country. In Iran, where the President's plans for a more democratic society faced entrenched opposition, much more progress was required on women's human rights, freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of religion, particularly with regard to the Baha'i. Canada regretted that there had been no substantial improvement in the human rights situation in Cuba over the past year and was deeply concerned that individuals continued to be harassed, detained and imprisoned for expressing their political views. In the Middle East, humanitarian principles and human rights were chronic casualties of the prevailing crisis in the region. Canada urged both parties to cease the violence immediately and resume negotiations. It welcomed the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh and called on the parties to respect them. The success of those political efforts would hinge on the ability of all concerned to put the safety, security and human rights of people first, and in so doing, to help bring calm, tolerance and stability to the region.

24. The Millennium Summit had endorsed a vision of the United Nations with the tools to make a real difference for people — in effect, to promote and ultimately ensure the enjoyment by people in all parts of the world of all their human rights. That was a goal that no country, including his own, could claim to have achieved; the debate under that item underscored the magnitude of the challenge which the world faced. Canada pledged its full cooperation with the United Nations in its efforts to translate the Millennium vision of all leaders into a daily reality for all citizens, whom States were duty-bound to serve.

25. **Mr. Erdös** (Hungary) endorsed the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union on human rights issues. On the question of the danger represented by manifestations of intolerance and discrimination, it must be recognized that each country had problems that must be solved at the national level. A clear repudiation of all forms of discrimination and the adoption of the necessary anti-discrimination measures, together with active participation in all international action to combat human rights violations, should be part of a consistent framework of government action.

26. In that context, one of the most urgent problems in central and eastern Europe was the situation of the Roma, who constituted a large ethnic group in Hungary and whose integration into society was as much a minority issue as an issue of social policy. His Government, in cooperation with the Roma autonomous administration, had adopted a series of medium-term measures, with associated annual action plans, the objective being to reduce social inequality, combat prejudice and prevent discrimination, and also to strengthen the Roma communities' identity and culture. The parliamentary commissioner for national and ethnic minorities served as the mediator for all minorities in Hungary, and his activities were a guarantee against impunity for breaches of the laws in force in that sphere. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had praised that institution in the speech she had made in Strasbourg at the recent European preparatory meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The holding of that Conference in 2001 would be a milestone on the road to mobilizing the international community in the protection of human rights. It must be recognized that the social integration of the Roma could not be achieved in the short term, and Hungary, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, was working on a long-term strategy to improve their social and legal situation and living conditions. The effectiveness of the strategy would be enhanced by action taken at the regional level by multilateral organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union. The government representatives responsible for minority affairs of Romania and the countries of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) had recently met in Prague to exchange views and experience on those countries' various approaches to Roma issues. The participants had agreed to support in their respective countries programmes that advocated tolerance and understanding and that emphasized the importance of action against xenophobia.

27. He wished to reiterate Hungary's vision of a future Europe as a continent united with respect to its values and aspirations, yet diverse with respect to its ethnic, religious and linguistic composition as well as to its traditions and customs. The human rights situation in society was closely related to the teaching and transmission of democratic values from generation to generation. His Government recognized the importance of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and had taken a number of educational and promotional measures in support of the establishment of a tolerant and multi-ethnic society. It must be acknowledged, however, that the manifestations of intolerance, xenophobia, demagoguery and political extremism were still part of European reality. Ignoring that reality would have grave consequences for democracy and the rule of law. Recalling that the protection of human rights was one of the core values of the foreign and domestic policies of the States participating in the construction of Europe, he said that the countries that aspired to join the European Union should give expression to that lofty aspiration through concrete measures aimed at consolidating democracy, strengthening the rule of law and creating stable institutions; in other words, applicant countries should adopt measures that reflected their willingness to carry out reforms. Thus, the expansion of the European Union constituted an achievement for the United Nations as far as human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world were concerned.

28. His delegation welcomed the readmission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Hungary's southern neighbour, to membership of the United Nations, and hailed the victory of democracy and popular will in that country with which Hungary had forged myriad ties over the centuries. He wished the peoples of Yugoslavia success in their monumental undertaking of national reconstruction and the construction of a democratic society that respected human rights, including the rights of minorities.

29. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that the respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms was the essential ingredient of international law. No single nation could claim custodianship of those basic rights. Aware that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided for "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" in their pursuit of the promotion and protection of all human rights, his Government was committed to the promotion and protection of the human rights of its citizens and was making earnest efforts to address problems besetting society in that area. It had designated the year 2000 as the year of "human rights and human dignity" to educate all segments of society on the importance of promoting and protecting human rights. Moreover, a comprehensive package of human rights initiatives had

been announced, some of which were already in the process of implementation. A comprehensive law had been promulgated on the juvenile justice system, which abolished the death penalty for offenders who were under 18 years of age at the time the crime had been committed. The Pakistani Citizenship Act of 1951 had been amended to provide equal rights to Pakistani citizenship to the children of Pakistani women or men married to foreigners. The physical environment of jails had been improved and more than 25,000 prisoners convicted of petty crimes had been freed. The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women had been established with a broad mandate to bring all governmental actions having a bearing on women and girls in line with Pakistan's international human rights obligations. The Commission had identified combating all forms of violence against women as its top priority. The Women Distress Fund, which provided legal assistance to women in distress, was now operational. The Government was taking appropriate steps to establish a National Human Rights Commission to provide the institutional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights of all segments of society, particularly women, children, minorities and other vulnerable groups.

30. Poverty was an affront to human dignity and was one of the major obstacles to the full and effective enjoyment of human rights. The lack of resources often hampered developing countries' efforts to invest in infrastructure, training and capacity-building for the promotion and protection of human rights. The widening income gap between the rich and the poor in the wake of globalization had further aggravated that situation. The Secretary-General's report on the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of human rights highlighted how global economic changes and external shocks could add to the vulnerabilities of developing countries and have an adverse impact on their full enjoyment of human rights. That issue needed further study in order to have a clearer understanding of all its implications. Pakistan attached particular importance to the full realization of the right to development. Having carefully considered the proposal by the Independent Expert on the Right to Development regarding the "development compact", his delegation considered the conditions attached to that concept totally unacceptable, since they were part of attempts to legitimize discriminatory international trade regimes by imposing cross conditionalities on developing countries.

31. Most serious violations of human rights occurred under foreign occupation and situations of armed conflict. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories was a matter of grave concern to his delegation. It therefore called upon all concerned to exercise restraint. The primary responsibility for improving the situation rested with the Israeli authorities. The disproportionate use of force must be stopped and an independent international inquiry must be conducted to determine the responsibility for the setback in the peace process. A permanent and comprehensive solution to the Question of Palestine should provide for the establishment of a State for the Palestinian people on the basis of their inalienable right to self-determination.

32. South Asia was the scene of one of the most atrocious human rights violations, in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, whose people, struggling for their inalienable right to self-determination, were being subjected to brutal repression by the Indian occupation forces. Furthermore, in an effort to mislead world opinion, mercenary groups had been created to terrorize the population and commit massacres. India's atrocities in Kashmir had been well documented by international human rights organizations. Asia Watch, in its report of 1999 entitled "India: Behind the Kashmir Conflict", had urged the General Assembly to condemn abuses by Indian security forces in Kashmir and called upon India to permit United Nations working groups and special rapporteurs to visit Kashmir. It had also called upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Kashmir and submit her findings to the Security Council and the General Assembly. According to Amnesty International's most recent report in 1999, the Government of India had not made any substantive response to allegations concerning the disappearance of between 700 and 8,000 people, whose fate remained unknown.

33. The Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance had also referred in his report to the massacre of Sikhs in Indian occupied Kashmir, which had coincided with the visit made to India by the President of the United States of America in March 2000. Independent observers had reported that there was every reason to believe that the massacre of innocent Sikh civilians had been orchestrated by India to give the impression to President Clinton and the many influential American journalists in his party that India was the helpless

victim of an alleged group of Islamic terrorists from Pakistan and Afghanistan. India's refusal to recognize the right to self-determination was the cause of the continuing human rights crisis in that region. More than 50 years earlier, the right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination had been affirmed in many Security Council resolutions and accepted by India. However, India had reneged on its word and used military force to strengthen its illegal occupation of the region. The international community, in particular the United Nations, had an obligation to meet the commitment made to the people of Kashmir so that they could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. A peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem would lead to peace, development and prosperity for the entire region of southern Asia.

34. In conclusion, with regard to the statement made by the representative of Canada, he observed that Canada seemed to have arrogated to itself the role of custodian of human rights the world over, a role which his Government could not accept. Canada's opinion would carry more weight were it not for its appalling silence in the face of the gross, systematic and well-documented human rights violations perpetrated by India in occupied Kashmir. Principles, and not expediency must govern the efforts of a human rights defender. He observed that in Canada women were treated as objects and exploited for purposes of trade, exhibitionism, tourism and entertainment. Furthermore, until recently the police in certain Canadian cities had left native Canadians accused of minor offences to die in the cold during the winter, which was a form of extrajudicial execution.

35. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) said that her Government accorded the highest priority to the promotion and protection of human rights and had adopted numerous measures in that regard. Since 1998 Mexico had had a national programme for the promotion and strengthening of human rights, in which various institutions, along with civil society and social organizations, participated. Dialogue with national non-governmental organizations had also been strengthened, in part for the purpose of evaluating that national programme. In 1997 an inter-departmental commission to monitor Mexico's international human rights commitments had been established. Mexico was a party to 58 human rights instruments and, during the current administration, had ratified nine international conventions; it had also accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the settlement of disputes. It had signed the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In keeping with Mexico's tradition of full cooperation with the representatives of international human rights mechanisms, during the current administration and by invitation of her Government, a number of international officials had visited the country, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Also under the current administration, legislative reforms had been approved granting full autonomy to the national human rights commission, as well as at the local level, the necessary amendments to enable an increasing number of state commissions to enjoy full independence. In the area of the fight against torture, all allegations had been rigorously investigated and training courses for the police and military personnel had been increased. With regard to the administration of justice, important initiatives had been adopted to strengthen the judiciary and guarantee its independence.

36. One of her Government's main concerns was the situation of migrants, who were victims of human rights violations and acts of violence and humiliation; it was particularly concerned about incidents in recent months along Mexico's northern border in which individuals had illegally detained migrants. In accordance with the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration, her delegation would submit three draft resolutions to the Committee. The first draft resolution called upon States to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the second reiterated the international community's interest in protecting migrants and stressed the important work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of migrants; and the third proposed establishing 18 December as the International Migrant's Day.

37. **Mr. Parnohadiningrat** (Indonesia) said that in his country the Government, non-governmental organizations and civil society were working together for the promotion and protection of human rights in order to overcome current and emerging problems. Achievements included the establishment of

democratic institutions such as the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the strengthening of the National Commission on Human Rights and other specialized institutions dealing with particular rights, the fulfilment by the democratically elected Parliament of its constitutional mandate to provide checks and balances on the executive branch, and the independent and free functioning of the media. Given the country's multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious make-up, the transition to democracy was an extremely complex process. The unrest in some parts of the country might stem from the social, cultural, economic and demographic changes that had taken place over time. It was for that reason that every effort for the maintenance of peace, the protection of the environment and the achievement of sustainable and equitable development, as part of the endeavours to promote and protect human rights, was being made through cooperative action at the national level. A strengthening of democratic ideals was being witnessed throughout the country, but those ideals could be threatened by intolerance, coupled with economic disparities within society. To cope with such challenges, Indonesia was striving for stronger institutions and infrastructures. It was astonishing that, despite the strenuous efforts that his Government was making to improve the human rights situation, certain delegations deemed it necessary to urge Indonesia to do more, when it would be more useful for them to offer help in finding solutions. His Government's commitment to strengthening human rights extended beyond the country's borders. It had supported the setting up of a human rights mechanism within the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to serve as a regional centre for training, research and development and for information dissemination and policy analysis on human rights.

38. The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights drew attention to significant progress in the integration of human rights in the development process. His delegation believed that the right to development required not only effective policies at the national level but also a favourable economic environment at the international level. It welcomed the report of the independent expert on the right to development, particularly the attention devoted to the international dimension of that right. It also took note of the activities of the Working Group on the Right to Development and the progress made at its September 2000 meeting. It hoped that positive results would be achieved at the Working Group's next meeting, scheduled for January 2001, ending the impasse of more than 10 years since the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development. With regard to the implementation of human rights instruments, his delegation welcomed the efforts of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies to further improve their functioning and ensure the effective implementation of those instruments. It noted from the report of the High Commissioner the importance attached to voluntary contributions, but took the view that adequate resources for the operation of each human rights body should be provided from within the regular budget of the United Nations. With regard to technical cooperation in the field of human rights, he stressed the importance of cost-effective and efficient implementation. Benchmarks to measure effectiveness should be established and a joint supervisory mechanism should be devised to ensure that programmes were implemented in a professional manner. Regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Government of Indonesia, the latter had decided not to renew the programme at its expiration date, since it believed that only cooperation based on mutual respect and taking fully into account the needs of the recipient country could be sustained.

39. **Mr. La** Yifau (China), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representatives of the United States and Canada had attacked his country. The United States representative had arrogantly accused more than 10 countries on the five continents, all of them developing countries. It would be appropriate to look at of the current human rights situation in the United States. The racial discrimination existing in that country was well known, as were police brutality against the population, the cruel treatment of prisoners and the violations of women's human rights. A country with such a negative record was in no position to talk about human rights, still less to censure other countries. The United States representative had repeatedly urged other countries to change their behaviour and to implement international human rights conventions. However, very few countries were doing so as yet, and the United States was not one of them as far as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were concerned. He hoped that the United States would have the courage to remedy its own shortcomings, improve its behaviour, quickly ratify the

aforementioned instruments and withdraw its numerous substantive reservations to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. What was even more shameful was that the United States Government used heavy weapons to attack its own religious groups while criticizing the legitimate actions carried out by the Chinese Government against the Falun Gong sect, with the full support of the Chinese people. The United States delegation was applying double standards and interfering in China's internal affairs. Over the past year, his Government had not only redoubled its efforts to eradicate poverty and maintain and accelerate the growth of the economy in order to improve the population's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, but also taken steps to establish democratic political and law enforcement systems and improved the system of judicial oversight. All those measures had improved the situation of the population, including all ethnic groups and minorities.

40. **Ms. Al-Juburi** (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United States, which had called for others to be put on trial, should be the first to be judged since it was the primary perpetrator of many crimes against humanity. It had been the first to use the atomic bomb and had used dioxins and excessive force against the people of Viet Nam. It had been engaged in an appalling campaign of genocide against the Iraqi people for the past 10 years and it was insisting on maintaining the embargo and sanctions against Iraq and using its veto to prevent the Security Council from adopting a resolution to lift sanctions that had caused a humanitarian disaster and more than 1.5 million deaths, most of them women and children. It had used uranium and radioactive substances against Iraq, with catastrophic consequences for the environment and for the health of not just the current generation but many generations to come. In 1991, the United States had bombed the Al'Amadiyah shelter, with the result that more than 850 children and civilians who had taken refuge there had burned to death. It had used overwhelming force to destroy the civil infrastructure of Iraqi society, undermining the Iraqi people's right to life, development and social and humanitarian assistance. It had also imposed no-fly zones without the approval of authorization of any Security Council resolution, while its aircraft carried out daily bombing raids against Iraq's civilian and economic infrastructure and facilities, causing tremendous human suffering and material damage; some 3,000 Iraqi citizens had dies as a result. With regard to the accusation by the United States representative that Iraq was trying to take advantage of the current tension in the Middle East to provoke a war, he reiterated that Iraq's position had always been one of total support for the Palestinian people and could not be attributed to the tragic events which that people was currently experiencing. The United States seemed to be saying that defending the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their territory from Zionist occupation was a hostile act as far as, human rights were concerned. The current balance of power in the world would not last for ever and the day would come when the United States was judged for the crimes that it had committed in the area of human rights.

41. **Mr. Ogurtsov** (Belarus), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made by the United States representative, pointed out that on 15 October 2000 Belarus had held parliamentary elections in accordance with its Electoral Code. Those elections had been monitored by 198 international observers from 28 countries around the world; a group of experts had expressed satisfaction with them and more than 140 observers had judged them to be free, open and fair. He was therefore at a loss to explain why the United States delegation had used information about the elections which had not been verified and which was absolutely unfounded. His delegation was also surprised that a civilized, democratic country had requested, almost formally, the repeal of a law adopted by the authorities of another sovereign State. Such a demand was inappropriate in the context of United Nations deliberations and recalled the confrontations of an era which he had thought long gone.

42. **Mr. Al-Mautada Mubarak** (Sudan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the unfair and irresponsible accusations made by the representative of Canada against his country, denied that his Government was bombing civilian targets: the rebels were using civilian installations as military bases from which to launch attacks on other parts of the country. His Government had agreed to give southern Sudan the right of self-determination, and it hoped that its people would freely opt for the country's unification. Sudan had admitted some 3 million people from southern Sudan who had sought refuge from the fighting. The representative of Canada had mentioned the plight of people who had been deported against their will, but had failed to mention that the Government was trying

to develop the region's resources, such as oil. Instead of commending the Government's efforts to safeguard human rights and develop the region, the representative of Canada had chosen to raise the issue of citizens deported against their will.

43. **Mr. Shahub** (Saudi Arabi), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed surprise at the accusations which the representative of Canada had made against his country and its judicial system without making any effort to understand its culture and history. His country's judicial system was based on the Shariah and its Constitution on the Koran. The Canadian delegation and others which made a habit of attacking Islam did not understand the essence of the religion that united millions of people. Canada had taken a selective approach to human rights; it was up to each sovereign State to decide whether or not to apply the death penalty, and that did not violate international law. His delegation categorically rejected the statement by the representative of Canada and the criticisms of its judicial system and urged that representative of Canada to visit Saudi Arabia's web site to find out what really went on in the country. That representative of Canada would have been better advised to raise the issue of the murders being committed against the Palestinian people, which could be seen every day on television.

44. **Mr. Le Hoai Trung** (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that there had already been extensive debates on the death penalty and that the latter was not a human rights issue. In Viet Nam, the death penalty was strictly regulated by law; it was applied to ensure the safety of society and only for the most serious crimes. With regard to political and religious freedoms, they were not only enshrined in the Constitution but also elaborated upon in other instruments. There was strict respect for political, religious and cultural rights in Viet Nam. In the interest of dialogue and full cooperation, nations in general should not take it upon themselves to judge others.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.